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# The Outlook for Italy

Submitted by the  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

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**The Outlook for Italy**

SECRET

## SECRET

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
CONCLUSIONS .....	1
DISCUSSION .....	3
I. THE PRESENT SITUATION .....	3
II. PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE COALITION .....	5
A. The Economic Problem .....	5
B. Political Maneuvering .....	6
C. Problems of Foreign Policy .....	8
D. The Fall Elections .....	9
III. THE IMPACT OF THE CENTER-LEFT COALITION UPON ITALIAN POLITICS AND POLICY .....	9
A. The Prospects for Communism .....	11
B. The Socialist Impact on Foreign Policy .....	11
C. Consequences of Collapse of the Coalition .....	12
Table:	
PARTY STRENGTHS IN POPULAR ELECTORAL VOTE IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS SINCE 1948 .....	13
Chart:	
PARTY COMPOSITION OF THE ITALIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, DECEMBER 1963 .....	14

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## THE OUTLOOK FOR ITALY

## CONCLUSIONS

A. The Catholic-Socialist coalition now governing Italy faces serious problems. Both major parties of the coalition are beset by internal dissensions, arising in large part from their decision to form the coalition. Both parties will face a crucial test in the nationwide municipal and provincial elections scheduled for this fall. Strong inflationary tendencies exist in the economy and have created a serious balance-of-payments problem. Measures are being taken to deal with these problems, but the delicate political situation imposes limits upon what can be done. Nevertheless, the economy remains basically sound and continues to grow. (*Paras. 10-12, 13-17, 23-24*)

B. The new coalition is responsive to the broad leftward trend of Italian political opinion. We believe that it will survive at least until the fall elections, and if it can make some headway in carrying out its program of reforms it will probably survive for some time thereafter. If it should then fall there is a fair chance that it would be succeeded by a similar coalition. If the government should collapse in circumstances making its reconstitution impossible there would almost certainly be a return to political instability and administrative drift. (*Paras. 25-27, 34-35*)

C. One of the principal aims of the coalition is to isolate and weaken the Communist Party. Communist leaders are struggling with great skill to defeat this aim; they have endorsed many of the reformist goals of the government, and they remain firmly entrenched in the labor movement. Despite difficulties and dissension within the party, reduction of its strength will at best be a long and difficult task. (*Paras. 29-31*)

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D. Socialist views on foreign policy differ in some respects from those of their coalition partners, and Italian membership in the MLF could become a divisive issue. On the whole, however, Socialist participation in the government is unlikely to bring about any fundamental changes in Italian foreign policy. (*Paras. 19-22, 32-33*)

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## DISCUSSION

## I. THE PRESENT SITUATION

1. Installation of the Moro government in December 1963 launched Italy on a political course which had been long in the making. A formal Catholic-Socialist coalition has come into being, and for the first time in a decade Italy has a government with a large parliamentary majority and a strong legislative program. For its Christian Democratic supporters, the coalition represents the best available way to avoid the stagnation of minority government, to isolate and weaken the Communist Party, and to execute a reform program desired by a majority of its own voters. For the Nenni Socialists, the coalition represents an escape from the isolation and futility of opposition, an opportunity to advance their social and economic goals, and a means to win back leadership of the Italian left.

2. The coalition came into being only after a long and bitter struggle. Early in 1962, an informal agreement led to a species of left-center co-operation, namely, a government without the Nenni Socialists but depending upon their parliamentary support. With this arrangement in being, regular parliamentary elections took place in April 1963. The results were disconcerting to the Christian Democratic leaders. The Communists increased their share of the vote from 22.7 percent to 25.3 percent as compared with the elections of 1958; the Christian Democratic vote fell from 42.4 percent of the total to 38.3 percent. The Nenni Socialists barely held their own at around 14 percent, while the Saragat Socialists made substantial gains. The total strength of the right increased only slightly; the Liberals—formerly in the government but now in opposition—almost doubled their vote, evidently at the expense of both the Christian Democrats and the Monarchists.<sup>1</sup>

3. Distressing as they were, these results were not difficult to explain. The Communists had become the only harbor for left-leaning votes of protest, and the less militant attitude of the Church had reduced the inhibitions upon the faithful casting their votes for Marxist candidates. At the same time, many Catholics and conservatives who had previously voted Christian Democratic but who had no stomach for coalition with the Socialists apparently transferred their support to the right, mainly to the Liberals.

4. The most important factor affecting the election results was the change in the economic and social structure of the country which had occurred during the previous five years. Rapid industrialization has converted Italy from a predominantly agricultural country to a predominantly industrial one. Workers have streamed out of the im-

<sup>1</sup> See Table on elections results, page 13.

SECRET

3

## SECRET

poverished villages and small cities of the south to seek jobs in the urban north. This large-scale migration, involving several million persons over the last decade, with the economic growth which made it possible, has resulted in dramatic advances in living standards for many Italian workers. It has also created new problems of housing, education, and general social adjustment, and has opened the eyes of many additional workers to the sharp distinctions in living standards and privilege between the wealthy and the ordinary citizen. At the same time, by freeing migrants from the social and religious constraints which operated in their original home areas, it has greatly facilitated the breakdown of old party loyalties and voting patterns.

5. In the wake of the discouraging election returns, the government resigned, and an attempt in June 1963 to constitute a similar coalition, but with more explicit support from the Socialists, was thwarted by last-minute opposition from the Lombardi faction in the Socialist Party. In December 1963, after a highly complicated series of negotiations, agreement was finally reached on establishment of a government—the present one—with Socialist participation. However, 25 left-wing Socialist deputies refused to vote for installation of the new government. A similar revolt by 36 Christian Democratic right-wingers was averted only by a sharply worded demand for Christian Democratic unity in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*.

6. On the whole, the immediate situation of the Moro government appears to be more favorable than the great difficulties and delays encountered in establishing it would suggest. While the political squabbles and setbacks of the last year presumably dissipated any optimism which may have developed about the "opening to the left" as a quick cure for Italy's political ills, they also had a sobering effect upon many of the political leaders concerned, reminding them that a stable government could not be formed without Socialist-Christian Democratic collaboration and that the most likely alternative was a new election—which few other than the Communists could afford. Despite the defection of Socialist left-wingers, the new government won an initial vote of confidence in the Chamber of Deputies by 350 to 233, a far larger margin than any government had enjoyed since the early 1950s.

7. In terms of practical arrangements, Prime Minister Moro and Socialist leader Nenni, now Vice Premier, have probably done as well as possible in parcelling out the 25 ministries so as to satisfy the divergent interests represented in their own parties and in the two smaller coalition partners. The new cabinet appears to be generally capable, and the unwillingness of such controversial figures as Fanfani and the maverick Socialist leader Lombardi to participate is at this stage probably more beneficial than harmful.



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8. In general, the coalition partners also appear to have done a good job of agreeing on a program aimed primarily at dealing with the social and economic inequities which still plague Italy in its new age of relative affluence. Specifically, the program calls for expanding the educational system, accelerating industrialization in the economically backward south, revamping the sharecropping system and generally overhauling the agricultural system, and revising the tax laws. The program also commits the new government to the task of overhauling the cumbersome and highly centralized structure of the government, and particularly to the elimination of bureaucratic practices which have made the government an object of general distrust and cynicism. Nevertheless, some major differences have merely been postponed—the creation of regional administrations, the financing of Catholic schools, matters of economic planning, income tax policy, and the question of Italy's participation in a multilateral nuclear force (MLF).

9. The new government faces formidable problems. It is committed to carrying out a far more ambitious and controversial program than any previous Italian government has been able to execute. It will be anxious to demonstrate some definite progress before being subjected to the psychological test presented by nationwide municipal elections in the autumn of 1964. More important, it must deal with an uncertain economic situation which has been marked by inflation, labor unrest, and lack of business confidence.

## II. PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE COALITION

### A. The Economic Problem

10. Italy's current inflation has its roots in the wage increases and the acceleration of consumer demand which have accompanied the extraordinary growth and prosperity of recent years. Rising incomes are resulting in increased demand both for consumer durables and for more expensive foods, such as meat, for which domestic production is inadequate. The cost of living rose by eight percent in 1963. Inflationary pressures have been somewhat contained through a steep rise in imports, which rose by 25 percent in 1963. Exports rose by only eight percent during the same period. Under these conditions the total balance of payments, which includes tourism earnings and other sources of foreign exchange, is expected to show a deficit of nearly \$1 billion for 1963, in contrast to a surplus of \$50 million in 1962.

11. There is a bright side. Industrial production and employment are at record highs. Gross national product (GNP) in real terms grew by a little over five percent in 1963, only slightly down from a full six percent in 1962. Production continues to rise. Gold and hard currency reserves, now about \$2.5 billion, are sufficient to meet foreign exchange requirements if counterinflationary measures are taken soon. However,

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business confidence has not yet recovered from its initial reaction against the establishment of the coalition. Capital continues to leave the country, though at a diminished rate. The government is anxious to prevent further stimulation of demand, especially in those areas which would aggravate the payments problem, and has made a beginning with the anti-inflationary measures promulgated on 22 February 1964. More incisive measures will probably be required to cope with present economic difficulties, but the government is feeling its way cautiously, anxious to avoid an austerity program that goes so far as to depress production or alienate its labor support.

12. The labor problem will probably create serious political as well as economic difficulties. Because of the inflation, there is strong pressure for wage increases throughout Italy, and it is supported by all three trade union federations. Already the government is faced with a threat from Italy's million or so civil servants; the problem is particularly difficult because one of the government's announced policies to curb inflation is to hold down government expenditures. In any event, a government which represents Socialists and liberal Christian Democrats will find it difficult to prevent strikes for higher wages or to oppose settlements which result in higher pay for workers. Moreover, opponents of the government in the Communist-dominated General Confederation of Labor will almost certainly seize upon the genuine unrest among workers over rising prices to press demands which will embarrass the government and strain its precarious unity.

**B. Political Maneuvering**

13. Some serious difficulties for the new government will also arise from the divisions and dissensions which were created by its formation. The most obvious problem lies within the Socialist Party, most of whose left-wing leaders, after having been disciplined for their failure to support the investiture of the new government, formed a new splinter party, the Socialist Party of Proletarian Unity (PSIUP). This event may prove of more benefit than harm to Nenni, since it freed the party of a strong minority element which had vociferously opposed Nenni's efforts to promote the "opening to the left." The split will also strengthen Nenni's hand vis-a-vis Riccardo Lombardi, whose refusal to go along last June wrecked the first attempt to formalize the center-left coalition. Until the break Lombardi was the virtual arbiter of party policy by virtue of his control of the swing vote in the Socialist Central Committee.

14. Thus far the rebels have had only limited success in getting Socialist local federations to walk out with them. They appear destined to win the support of far less of the party rank-and-file than their previous possession of more than a third of the seats in the Socialist Central Committee would have suggested. Nonetheless, Nenni must move care-

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fully—especially with nationwide local elections coming up next fall—so as to avoid undue vulnerability to accusations by the PSIUP leaders and the Communists that he has betrayed the working class through his collaboration with the Christian Democrats.

15. Nenni's situation is further complicated by the fact that the Socialists are still allied with the Communists in a number of local administrations and are deeply involved with the Communists in a variety of producer and distributor cooperatives and in the General Confederation of Labor. Although the Socialists are the weaker partner in the Confederation, they are deeply committed to the idea that the battle for leadership of the labor movement must be fought within it, and that a Socialist walkout would further divide and weaken the working class. Indeed, the Socialist leaders fear that many of their followers would refuse to heed a call for a walkout. Hence the Communists, at least so long as the rank-and-file goes along, are in a position to demand Socialist support for strikes and boycotts which the government, in which the Socialists participate, may consider unwise and economically dangerous.

16. Unlike the Socialists, the Christian Democrats escaped an actual split over the creation of a center-left coalition government. Nevertheless, Premier Moro brings to the political alliance a Christian Democratic Party that is an aggregation of diverse, often warring, elements. On Moro's right, the party contains powerful figures in its conservative faction, such as ex-Premiers Scelba and Pella, who have consistently opposed collaboration with the Socialists. Although this faction has only a small representation within party councils, the political stature of its members gives it a powerful position in Italian politics. On Moro's left, the followers of former Premier Fanfani remain convinced that only Fanfani himself can effectively lead such a government. Fanfani is now preparing for a possible political comeback by attempting to regain leadership of the party organization.

17. Even within Moro's own and dominant Christian Democratic faction, President Segni and others opposed the formation of the Moro government. Segni has argued that the Italian Socialists cannot be trusted to give full loyalty to the Atlantic Alliance, and that a Socialist presence in the government will not only increase Communist power in Italy but bring disastrous changes in the economic system. In spite of these views, Segni has, publicly at least, supported Moro since the government was formed.

18. Indeed, there is no dearth of issues which can be exploited by the enemies of the coalition. In addition to those noted above, one of the more important is that of the establishment of regional governments. The new government is committed to the creation of these governments, but the Christian Democrats have been holding back while seeking public

SECRET

7

## SECRET

confirmation of private assurances by the Socialists that the latter will form regional coalitions with the Christian Democrats and not with the Communists. The stakes are high because the regional governments could play a major role in the development of party strength.

## C. Problems of Foreign Policy

19. For the most part, issues of foreign policy are unlikely to have a critical effect on the fortunes of the government. The question of Italy's participation in the MLF, however, was of serious consequence for a time while the government was being formed, and it could become serious again if it were prematurely pushed to a decision. Foreign Minister Saragat and a number of the Christian Democratic leaders favor the MLF. They are desirous of supporting US policy, and they see the MLF as a means both of assuring Italy's own participation in control of NATO nuclear policy and of circumscribing German nuclear ambitions. The Socialists, on the other hand, are concerned at the prospect of German participation, and they fear that the Communists may exploit this controversial issue. Nevertheless, Nenni has indicated that his party might be persuaded to approve the MLF after the coalition has become more firmly established. However, the Socialists would prefer to make Italian participation dependent on that of the UK; indeed, they almost certainly hope that continued British unwillingness to join will prevent the project from coming to fruition and thus enable the Socialists to avoid a difficult decision.

20. Saragat's desire to move ahead with the MLF is tempered by his recognition of the dangers of forcing a decision prematurely and by his own preference for British participation before committing Italy. Moro, who is more concerned to keep the coalition alive than to act on the MLF, will almost certainly seek to postpone or to slow down movement toward an Italian commitment. It is possible, however, that events might move faster than Moro or Saragat would like, and that the development of the project on the international level might gain a momentum which would force an Italian decision at an early or politically inconvenient date.

21. In a more general sense, some Christian Democrats want a more active foreign policy than Italy has hitherto conducted. Foreign Minister Saragat also is an energetic and ambitious leader who hopes that Italy will play a vigorous role in Europe, particularly in the European integration movement. Saragat's conduct of policy thus far underlines the demand of Italian leaders that Italy's importance be reflected in the councils of the Western Alliance. This demand has its roots in Italy's growing sense of strength and self-confidence; it also stems from the frustration Italy feels at being unable to claim parity with the UK, France, and West Germany, yet unwilling to be numbered with Belgium and the Netherlands. As a consequence of these feelings, the Italians

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would wish to be included along with West Germany in any enlargement of the NATO Standing Group. They will continue to be sensitive to any indication that Italy might not be included along with West Germany and other large powers in whatever new mechanisms may be set up for determining NATO nuclear policy.

22. The Socialists, for their part, have not shaken off all vestiges of their onetime interest in limiting military alliances and in "denuclearizing" or otherwise neutralizing the European continent. They are generally reluctant to extend Italian commitments within the NATO framework. Such attitudes will place certain restraints upon the government's foreign policy. Nevertheless, we see no evidence thus far that Socialist participation in the government has led to a weakening of Italy's fundamental ties with the US and with NATO.

#### D. The Fall Elections

23. The municipal and provincial elections scheduled for the autumn of 1964 will to some degree test the voters' attitude toward the coalition parties, since the Italian parties are national and voters tend to vote for the same parties at the local as at the national level. Although local issues and leaders will play a role, national party leaders and political observers will regard shifts in party strength in these elections as indicative of popular reaction to national party policies. Thus, there would be a tendency to regard losses by the coalition partners as dissatisfaction with the national leadership.

24. The entry of the Socialists into the government will result in some loss of votes by them and possibly by the Christian Democrats as well. The Socialists have, after all, undergone major surgery and anticipate some losses. The problem for the coalition will be to face any losses which occur and to proceed with its program without suffering a loss of will or a decline in unity.<sup>2</sup>

### III. THE IMPACT OF THE CENTER-LEFT COALITION UPON ITALIAN POLITICS AND POLICY

25. The various problems which we have discussed above will pose threats to the present coalition, especially during the current year. We believe that it will survive them, at least until the fall municipal

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<sup>2</sup> The Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, believes that it is premature to attempt an estimate of the results of local elections, which are tentatively scheduled for November 1964 but which could well be postponed until the spring of 1965. Furthermore, he believes that estimates of net gains or losses are especially dubious where an estimate of the total vote is not possible. In any case, however, since the Socialists "anticipate some losses" as a result of their recent split, he cannot agree that "any losses" by the coalition partners would be regarded as dissatisfaction with the national leadership.

SECRET

9

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elections. Longer term prospects are more difficult to discern. The coalition will sooner or later have to make some headway in its ambitious reform program if it is to maintain political momentum and generate popular support. Such success will require not only a continued desire on the part of both major coalition partners to have the experiment succeed, but also a capacity for effective administration which key members of the Moro government, particularly the Socialists, have had little opportunity to develop. Moro's success in revamping the machinery of government may be a key to the overall fortunes of the government.

26. In a broader sense, the political complexion of Italy favors continuance of the coalition, or the formation of another like it if it should collapse. The old formula of a center coalition is no longer viable. The political center of gravity in the Italian body politic has been moving steadily—albeit slowly—to the left. Not only have the avowedly left-of-center parties—including the Communists—been gaining at the expense of the center and right, but the left-of-center faction in the Christian Democratic Party is growing in strength. The political strength of the democratic left would be substantially strengthened if the two Socialist parties reunited. The chances of this occurring within the next few years have been increased by the establishment of the center-left coalition.

27. This leftward movement is partly the result of the social and economic changes which have occurred, the growing industrialization and urbanization, and the progressive dissociation of large numbers of people from their traditional ways and ideas. It is partly also the result of the changing policies of the leftist parties themselves. Both the Socialists and Communists have become less revolutionary in their announced methods; they have put themselves forward as reformists, and this has struck a responsive chord among Italians, who by and large are dissatisfied with things as they are but not disposed to tear their society apart from some rhetorical principle. It is also partly the result of the changed attitude of the Roman Catholic Church, which has substantially modified its previous blanket condemnation of Marxism. While this has given the Church a new and liberal image, it has also given a greater respectability to the parties and doctrines of the left.

28. These changes raise a number of important questions. If the political center of gravity is moving leftward and if the Communists are gaining greater respectability, what are the prospects for isolating and weakening them, as the new coalition aims to do? If the left, and particularly the Nenni Socialists, are to play a major role in Italian Government, what will be the long-run effect upon Italian foreign policy? If the center-left coalition principle is so necessary to secure effective government for Italy, what would be the consequence of a collapse of

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the coalition over one or more of the serious difficulties which confront it?

**A. The Prospects for Communism**

29. In many respects the Italian Communist Party is the very model of what a Communist party can accomplish in a capitalist society. Under the shrewd leadership of Palmiro Togliatti, the party has built up an extensive network of local organizations for recruiting supporters and dispensing social services, with the result that approximately one of every four Italian voters casts his ballot for the Communists. More important, it has recognized that, if it was to retain its identity and to survive as a political force in Italy, it needed to adapt its ideology and its tactics to the realities of Italian politics. It has done so without much regard to Moscow's sensitivities or to the importunities of Communist leaders in other countries.

30. However, the Communist Party also has problems. Its membership has declined, even if its vote-getting capacity has not. There is and has been for some years considerable dissension throughout the party over questions of tactics, ideology, and relations with other Communist parties. The creation of a new left-wing Socialist party will create problems, since it is sufficiently doctrinaire to attract Communist die-hards disgruntled over Togliatti's revisionist and Titoist policies.

31. Nevertheless, little if any real decline in Communist strength appears likely for some years to come. The Communists have adopted the very clever tactic of endorsing many of the announced goals of the new government; they have refused to allow themselves to be isolated. At the same time, they continue to voice their belief that substantial and lasting reforms cannot come about except through a regime in which they participate. The process of reform will indeed be difficult, especially in light of the problems which the government now confronts. Thus, events will to some degree appear to prove the Communist allegations. While there are limits upon the extent to which the Communists can go in playing the role of a reformist party without losing their own élan and their own doctrinaire left, they have chosen the road which will make a reduction of their own popular strength at best a long and difficult task.

**B. The Socialist Impact on Foreign Policy**

32. Socialist foreign policy is officially neutralist, but in recent years the Socialists have defined neutralism quite differently than they did a decade ago. They now say that "to withdraw from NATO under present conditions would jeopardize the European equilibrium" and might upset the "truce" between blocs. What they say they want is for Italy to remain loyal to its commitments within the Western Alli-

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11

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ance, while seeking a detente which makes military blocs unnecessary. They clearly approve of the European Economic Community. These attitudes are in sharp contrast to the pro-Soviet character of their policy in the past. Now shorn of their pro-Soviet and radical left-wing, they are more free than ever to adjust and reformulate policies in a manner desired by their pro-Western coalition partners. Their principal concern remains the extent to which the Communists and the new left-wing Socialist party can make political capital out of adjustments in the Socialist position.

33. All factors considered, we believe that continued Socialist participation in the government will not bring about fundamental changes in Italian foreign policy. So long as the Socialists are not pushed too hard or too fast, they can probably adjust to whatever is required of them. Meanwhile, they will support what has been a growing trend in Italian policy, namely, a greater tendency toward independence, assertion of a larger Italian voice in Western policies, and a desire to explore ways and means of resolving international differences.

#### C. Consequences of Collapse of the Coalition

34. The consequences of the collapse of the coalition would depend greatly upon the conditions under which it occurred, how long it had endured, and what further changes in party alignments had materialized before its collapse. Conceivably, the government might fall in such circumstances that the whole concept of Christian Democratic-Socialist cooperation would have to be abandoned, at least for a time. Such a situation would probably mean a return to governmental drift and instability and a further erosion of popular confidence in the ability of the democratic parties to deal with Italy's problems.

35. We think it more likely that the breakup, if it occurs, will take place without serious political and personal recrimination, and will be occasioned by some issue which is transitory. In this event, there will be a good chance that a similar coalition can soon be reconstituted and things go on much as before. Because all the parties concerned appreciate the problems for Italy and for themselves which would flow from a collapse under acrimonious circumstances, we believe they will make every effort to leave the door open for re-establishing a coalition if they are forced to abandon it over some particularly difficult issue.



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## TABLE

PARTY STRENGTHS IN POPULAR ELECTORAL VOTE  
IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS SINCE 1948  
(In percentage)

	1948	1953	1958	1963
Communists .....		22.6	22.7	25.3
Communists and Nenni Socialists .....	31 <sup>a</sup>			
Nenni Socialists .....		12.7	14.2	13.8
Saragat Socialists .....	7.1	4.5	4.6	6.1
Republicans .....	2.5	1.6	1.4	1.4
Christian Democrats .....	48.5	40.1	42.4	38.3
Liberals .....	3.8	3.0	3.5	7.0
Monarchists .....	2.8	6.9	4.8	1.7
Neo-Fascists .....	2.0	5.8	4.8	5.1

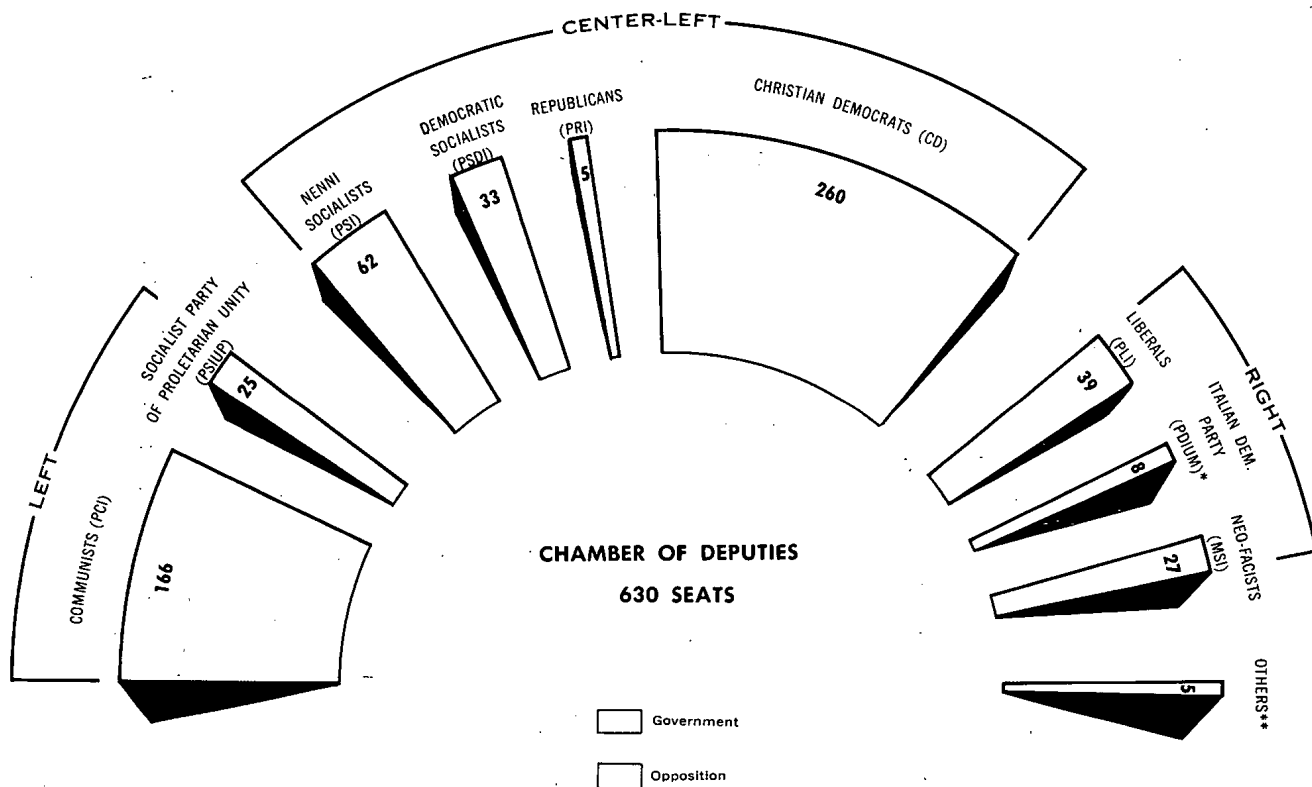
<sup>a</sup> Popular Democratic Front of Communists and Socialists.

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13

# PARTY COMPOSITION OF THE ITALIAN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

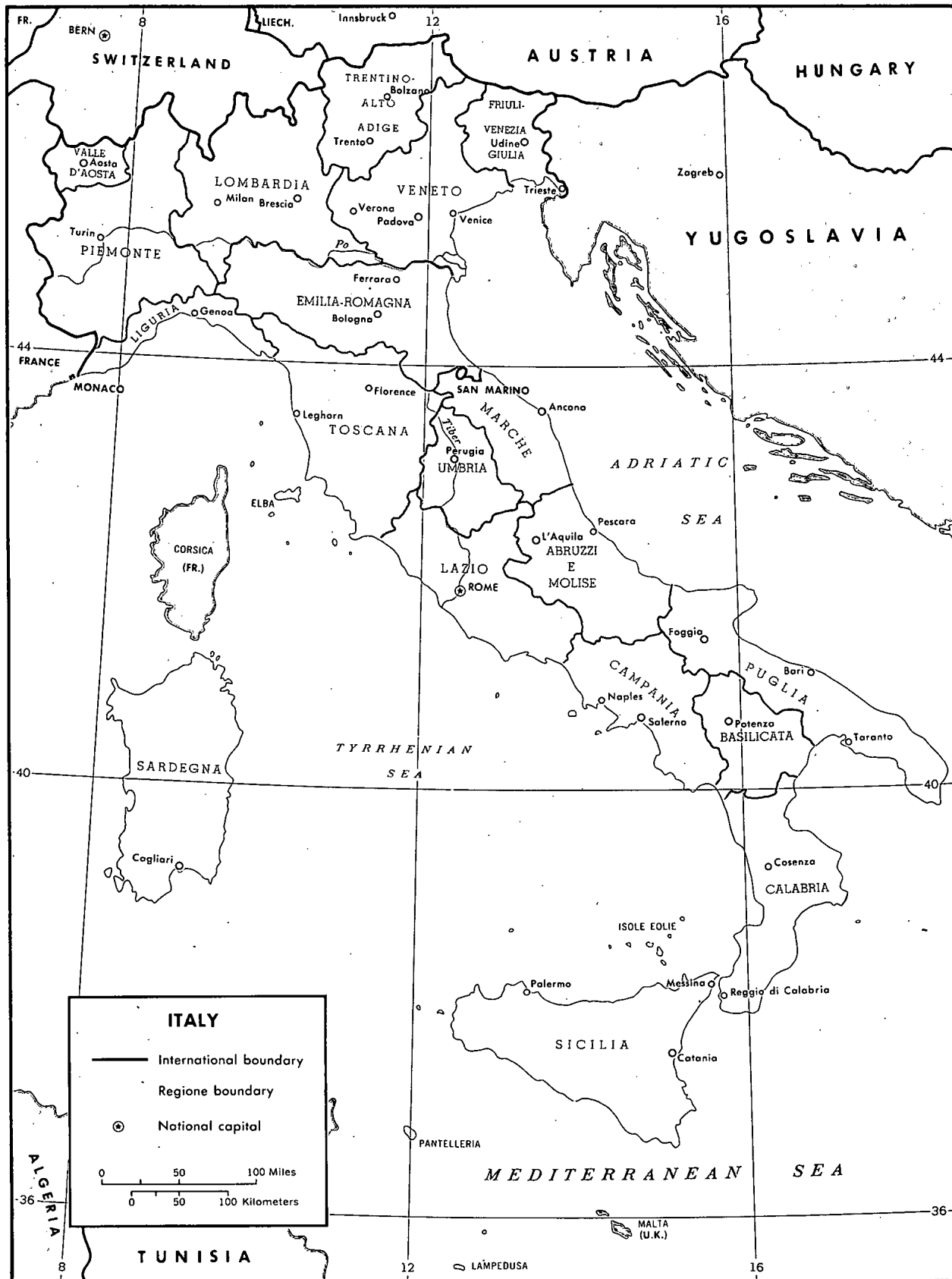
December 1963



\*Monarchist

\*\*Includes seats held by deputies who cannot be readily classified with any of the above parties because they represent individual, dissident or regional points of view.

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